

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to FIG. 1. FIG. 1 has been amended to include the label --Conventional--.

Attachment: Replacement sheet

REMARKS

Claims 4-7, 9-11, 15-17, 20 and 21 are pending. Claims 4-7, 9-11 and 15-17 are amended. Claims 20 and 21 are new. Claims 1-3, 8, 12-14 and 18-19 are canceled.

Claim Amendments

New claim 20 includes all of the subject matter of canceled claims 1, 2, 3 and 8. New claim 21 includes all of the subject matter of canceled claims 1, 2, 11 and 18. Claims

Claims 4, 5, 7, 9-11, 15 and 16 have been amended to depend from new claim 20. Claim 17 has been amended to depend from claim 10.

Claims 4-7, 9-11 and 15-17 have been further amended to correct errors, improve readability and eliminate recitations of reference numbers.

No new matter has been added.

Drawing Objections

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings for lacking an indication that FIG. 1 relates to 'old' subject matter. FIG. 1 has been appropriately labeled as "Conventional" in the attached replacement sheet.

Specification Objections

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the specification for lacking headings. The specification has been amended to include the appropriate headings.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 8 and 18.

Claim Objections

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections to claims 5, 9 and 11 for containing informalities. Claims 5, 9 and 11 have been amended to address the issues cited by the Examiner.

Claim Rejections- 35 U.S.C. §112

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2, 6, 13, 14, 16 and 17 as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claims 2, 13 and 14 have been canceled. Claim 6 has been amended to remove the rejected terms appearing in parentheses. Claim 16 has been amended to depend from new claim 20, which provides antecedent basis for the rejected recitation of “the spacer sleeve.” Claim 17 has been amended to depend from new claim 10, which provides antecedent basis for the rejected recitation of “the irregularities.”

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102/103

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Mazel (US 5,704,936). Claims 1, 2 and 12 are canceled. Claims 4, 5 and 10 now depend from claim 20. Claim 20 includes the subject matter of canceled claim 8, which the Examiner indicated included allowable subject matter. Therefore, claims 4, 5, 10 and 20 are allowable over Mazel.

Claim 21 includes the subject matter of canceled claim 18, which the Examiner indicated included allowable subject matter. Therefore, claim 21 is also allowable over Mazel.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 3, 4, 7, 12-15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Jorneus et al. (US 6,902,401) in view of Mazel and Perisse (US 5,417,569). Claims 3 and 12-14 are canceled. Claims 4, 7, 15 and 16 now depend from new claim 20. As stated above, claim 20 includes the subject matter of canceled claim 8, which the Examiner indicated included allowable subject matter. Therefore, claims 4, 7, 15, 16 and 20 are allowable over Jorneus et al. in view of Mazel and Perisse.

Claim 21 includes the subject matter of canceled claim 18, which the Examiner indicated included allowable subject matter. Therefore, claim 21 is also allowable over Jorneus et al. in view of Mazel and Perisse.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 9 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Jorneus et al. in view of Mazel and Perisse, and further in view of Lee (US 2002/0064758). Claim 9 now depends from new claim 20, which includes the allowable subject matter of canceled claim 8. Therefore, claims 9 and 20 are allowable over Jorneus et al. in view of Mazel and Perisse, and further in view of Lee.

Claim 21 includes the allowable subject matter of canceled claim 18. Therefore, claim 21 is also allowable over Jorneus et al. in view of Mazel and Perisse, and further in view of Lee.

Double Patenting Rejection

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the provisional obviousness-type double-patenting rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 15 and 16 in view of claims 1, 3 and 6 of copending Application No. 10/451,530. Claims 1 and 2 are canceled. Claims 4, 5, 15 and 16 now depend from new claim 20, which includes the allowable subject matter of canceled claim 8. Therefore, claims 4, 5, 15 and 16 are not obvious in view of claims 1, 3 and 6 of copending Application No. 10/451,530.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

If a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 22-0185, under Order No. 21547-00297-US1 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment